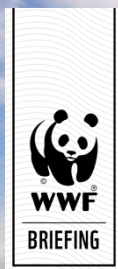


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# CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

WESTERN PROVINCE RIDGES TO REEF: INTEGRATED PLANNING FOR  
NATURAL RESOURCES, COMMUNITIES, AND BIODIVERSITY

8/30/2015

World Wide Fund for Nature, Solomon Island

Compiled By: WWF-SI Jessica Rutherford

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## PROJECT BACKGROUND DETAILS

<b>Organization Legal Name:</b>	Worldwide Fund for Nature, Solomon Islands
<b>Project Title:</b>	Western Province Ridges to Reef: Integrated planning for natural resources, communities, and biodiversity.
<b>Date of Report:</b>	August 30, 2015
<b>Report Author and Contact Information</b>	Jessica Rutherford (WWF Gizo) jrutherford@wwfpacific.org Shannon Seeto (Project lead contact) sseeto@wwfpacific.org

**CEPF Region:** East Melanesian Islands  
**Strategic Direction:** Empower local communities to protect and manage globally significant biodiversity at priority Key Biodiversity Areas underserved by current conservation efforts  
**Grant Amount:** \$50000.00  
**Project Dates:** May 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2015

### IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

#### Local Partners

Kolombangara Island Biodiversity Conservation Association (KIBCA)  
 Gizo Environment and Livelihoods Conservation Association (GELCA)  
 Western Province Government and relevant departments  
 Western Province Church organizations, youth and sporting groups  
 Gizo Women's Association  
 National Resource Development of Forestry (NRDF)  
 Ecological Solutions \*\*

#### International

The Nature Conservancy (TNC)  
 WorldFish Center

(\*\* R2R Expert organizations identified and engaged during project component activities)

This initial R2R project worked extensively with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to allow for the transferring of knowledge, skills and lessons learned from the Isabel and Choiseul Ridges to Reef conservation planning processes. Ecological Solutions was utilized for its expertise and awareness experience working on R2R conservation management in Solomon Islands. WWF has gained support and is working in partnership with TNC, KIBCA, GELCA, Kolombangara and Ghizo Island communities, the Western Province government and other key stakeholders to increase R2R awareness within the Western Province and to progress to a second R2R phase.

WWF has and will continue to facilitate the awareness raising and R2R participatory planning processes with these key partners and stakeholders in the event of a second R2R project phase.

## R2R PROJECT REPORT

### **CONTRIBUTION TO CEPF ECOSYSTEM PROFILE:**

Contributions to CEPF ecosystem profile were accomplished through the strategic direction of empowering local communities to protect and manage globally significant biodiversity at priority *Key Biodiversity Areas* under served by current conservation efforts.

Communities surrounding Gizo (Ghizo Island/Gizo town) and Kolombangara Island were identified as a priority area in the CEPF Ecosystem Profile. WWFSI facilitated the development of Ridges to Reef conservation planning through a participatory stakeholder process. Using a phase approach, this project aimed(s) to build the capacity, knowledge and awareness of the people of the Western Province to steer the sustainable management and planning of their natural resources so that they continue to meet food security and livelihood needs and help maintain environmental services essential for human well-being.

In this initial phase, the goal was to increase knowledge and build capacity on the Ridges to Reef conservation management approach in the Western Province. In line with CEPF ecosystem profile, contributions in this phase were achieved through raising awareness, gaining support, and building capacity of partners (key stakeholders, local and provincial government, community and civil society groups) for a Kolombangara and Ghizo Island R2R conservation management strategy.

Knowledge gained has and will continue to help guide future R2R activities utilizing the participatory approaches that aim to assist local and national government, civil society groups and private sector organizations on decision making regarding the sustainable use and management of natural resources within the Western Province.

Utilizing participatory approaches within this project, local communities and the key civil society groups, especially KIBCA and GELCA, have been and will continue to be engaged in the process of developing Ridges to Reef conservation plans for Kolombangara and Ghizo Islands in partnership with the Western Province Government and supported by WWF and The Nature Conservancy.

### **SUMMARY OF OVERALL RESULTS/IMPACTS:**

As a result of the combined awareness and capacity building efforts made during the introductory phase of this R2R project in the Western Province, WWF staff and engaged R2R stakeholders now have a greater understanding of what the implementation phase of Ridge to Reef project will entail.

Specifically, through the R2R awareness activities carried out in Component 1 and 2, the project has been successful in increasing stakeholder knowledge on the requirements for, and importance of, Ridges to Reef conservation planning. The goal of raising awareness on the need for a more holistic conservation approach, i.e. planning to conserve both marine and terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystem services, was achieved through Component 1 activities. Stakeholders, including communities, now have a greater understanding of how R2R can help support food security and livelihoods, thus maintaining human well-being.

Similarly, through the activities conducted in Component 2, increased capacity and support amongst Provincial Government staff, local associations, and communities for the development of future Ridges to Reef plans has been achieved.

#### Specific Results:

- Increased awareness and education amongst stakeholders and community groups on the role that resource management can play in conserving biodiversity, community wellbeing, livelihoods, and resiliency of natural system against threats associated with climate change

- Increased support and capacity amongst local associations (KIBCA, GELCA), NGOs (Ecological Solutions, NRDF), government departments in the Western Province and WWF SI staff for development of an R2R conservation plan for Kolombangara and Ghizo Islands
- Identification of data sets and information needed to support the analyses of threats and opportunities within the natural environments of Kolombangara and Ghizo Islands required for the anticipated participatory R2R planning process

Based on lessons learnt and discussions had with potential implementing partners, WWF and stakeholders are now better equipped to transition from an introductory to an implementation phase of a Ridges to Reef conservation strategy in Western Province.

#### **PLANNED LONG-TERM IMPACTS - 3+ YEARS (AS STATED IN THE APPROVED PROPOSAL):**

- To apply a progressive approach across the Western Province building on awareness and capacity building efforts previously made on Kolombangara and Ghizo Islands.
- Using R2R, to adapt a more integrated management approach that utilizes coastal zone planning for Kolombangara and Ghizo Islands, and other parts of the Western Province.
- To increase informed and improved decision making over the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in the Western Province, and to link this to Solomon Island NBSAP and to other relevant national commitments including Solomon Islands' Coral Triangle Initiative National Plan of Action.
- To increase engagement with civil society members through the inclusion in decision making processes pertaining to resource use and sustainable development on Kolombangara and Ghizo Islands.
- To increase the resilience of communities and natural habitats to climate change and other environmental impacts.
- To link terrestrial and marine conservation efforts, and strengthen protection of critical habitats and ecosystems services.
- To increase food security and maintain livelihoods, thus improving well-being, within Western Province.

#### **ACTUAL PROGRESS TOWARD LONG-TERM IMPACTS AT COMPLETION:**

The initial phase of this project was focused on increasing education, awareness and capacity on R2R conservation planning. The majority of the planned long-term impacts will not be realized until after an implementation phase. It is therefore anticipated that continued R2R work in Western Province will work towards achieving stated long-term impacts. At this stage, when reporting on project progress, the short-term impacts are most applicable and relevant.

However, early steps in progressing towards long-term impacts were made during this introductory phase: support of key stakeholders was gained for a more integrated conservation approach; awareness amongst key stakeholders on the benefits and utility of such an approach has increased; and capacity has been built, enabling key stakeholders to be more involved in future R2R activities that will aim to achieve more lasting impacts.

#### **PLANNED SHORT-TERM IMPACTS - 1 TO 3 YEARS (AS STATED IN THE APPROVED PROPOSAL):**

- Raise awareness on the importance of marine and terrestrial biodiversity and the role ecosystem services play in supporting livelihoods, foods security, and essential services for human wellbeing.
- Increase capacity amongst Provincial Government staff, local associations, and communities for the development of a Kolombangara and Ghizo Island Ridges to Reef plan. The short term aim is

to increase the knowledge and capacity of the Western Province Government on R2R conservation strategies, in order to undertake R2R planning in other Western Province districts and islands.

- Identification of data sets required for the R2R planning process. Gathered data will support the analyses of threats to natural resources enabling more effective protection of critical habitats and ecosystem services. Identification of available data will help guide planners in the early stages of the implementation phase when outstanding data is required for the generation of complete data sets.
- Develop an action plan to guide future R2R planning processes. The Plan of Action will aim to identify what the anticipated planning process will entail and how stakeholders can be involved in progressing towards achieving the project's long-term goals.
- Increase involvement of local communities and key civil society groups, especially KIBCA and GELCA, in decision making and policy development pertaining to the management of natural resources. Where appropriate, support and encourage these groups to take leadership in advocating for the development of a Ridge to Reef plan for Kolombangara and Ghizo Islands.

#### **ACTUAL PROGRESS TOWARD SHORT-TERM IMPACTS AT COMPLETION:**

During this phase of the project, much progress was made in achieving the planned short-term impacts. Through the initial awareness and capacity building R2R activities, awareness on the importance of conserving marine and terrestrial biodiversity, and ecosystems services has been increased. Stakeholders now have a greater understanding of the role that their natural environment plays in supporting livelihoods, foods security, and essential services for human wellbeing.

Capacity amongst Provincial Government staff, local associations, and communities for the development of a Ridge to Reef plan has also increased since the beginning of the project.

#### Progress toward short-term impacts:

- Awareness has been raised on the need to utilize an integrated resource management strategy to better conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services. This was achieved through stakeholder and community R2R awareness programs, which included the production and distribution of R2R awareness materials. Media outlets were also used to communicate messages about the R2R approach to the general public.
- Capacity building activities conducted under Component 2 of the project, were successfully implemented and resulted in increased capacity amongst stakeholders (Provincial Government staff, local associations, and communities) for the development of a Ridges to Reef plan for both Kolombangara and Ghizo Islands.
- Identification of information and data sets required for future R2R participatory planning activities was achieved during the final capacity building workshop. It is now clear what data is already available and what data will need to be obtained for the participatory mapping processes anticipated to occur in the next phase of the project.
- A Phase 2 Plan of Action was developed using knowledge gained through the initial project phase along with feedback received from the various stakeholders. WWF staff and implementing partners now have greater capacity to create integrated R2R plans for Kolombangara and Ghizo Islands. The Plan of Action will assist partners moving forward by identifying what the next steps will entail and by guiding them through the transition from the introductory to implementation phase of the project.
- Increased support and engagement of civil society groups (KIBCA and GELCA) and communities was obtained through activities carried out within this phase of the project. Stakeholders at the community level now have a greater ability to take the lead in the advocacy and processes of developing a Ridge to Reef plan for Kolombangara and Ghizo Islands. Working partnerships have

been strengthened between the Western Province Government, TNC, Ecological Solutions, community-based organizations, communities, WWF and other stakeholders that will be involved in future R2R efforts in Western Province.

Hectares Protected: Not Applicable for this Phase of funding  
Species Conserved: Not Applicable for this Phase of funding  
Corridors Created: Not Applicable for this Phase of funding

## **SUCCESS/CHALLENGES ACHIEVING SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM IMPACT OBJECTIVES:**

### Successes

- The strong adaptive management capabilities of the WWF SI team enabled all project activities to be successfully implemented and deliverables to be achieved, despite delays experienced and changes made to the initial planned timeframes.
- Increased support from the partners and stakeholders for an integrated Ridges to Reef conservation management strategy for the whole of the Western Province.
- Productive awareness and capacity building workshops generated much discussion amongst stakeholders and potential R2R partners in Western Province. Experiences were shared, lessons learnt were summarized and recommendations for moving forward were made. Areas of overlap between NGOs were also highlighted during talks of how the various stakeholders can work together more efficiently. Much knowledge and helpful feedback was obtained throughout this phase of the project.
- Strong working relationships, which enabled the WWF SI team to successfully conduct project activities, have been strengthened further. WWF worked in close partnership with both KIBCA and GELCA on this project, building their capacity so that they are better able to support their communities. Relationships and partnerships with other NGOs (TNC, WorldFish, NRDF, SICCP, Ecological Solutions, American Museum of Natural History and the Wildlife Conservation Society), Provincial and National government departments (Forestry, Fisheries, Planning), communities, and other stakeholders have also been reinforced or initiated. Community and partner engagement is crucial for the success of all projects and doing it well is one of WWF SI's many attributes.

### Challenges

Various obstacles and challenges made it difficult for achieving project outcomes and implementing project activities in accordance with the proposed timeframe.

- Working with inter-provincial partners has been and continues to be a challenge for WWF. The various federal government departments were engaged and invited to attend/contribute to the capacity building activities, however government support for R2R was limited to Western Province representatives.
- Scheduling around the availability of partners and community groups caused delays and interruptions to planned project timeframes. This past year, the national election presented an obstacle when WWF staffs were trying to engage communities in awareness activities. Communities were unavailable for many weeks.
- Weather is another factor that greatly influences the implementation of project activities, as travel to communities and within the project areas is done by boat. This past cyclone season was quite active, making travel by boat a safety concern for WWF staff and implementing partners. After working for over a decade in this setting, WWF SI staffs have highly developed adaptive management skills and were therefore still able to carry out all project activities prior to project deadlines.
- As WWF SI consists of a small team, it is a challenge to manage the various coinciding projects. Often project timeframes are conflicting, resulting in overworked and frustrated staff.

- Changes in WWF SI staff in the Gizo office during this first phase of the R2R project intensified the challenges described above. For many months the team in Gizo consisted of only 3 staff (including one volunteer from overseas). One of the staff members that left WWF during this time was the education and awareness officer, who would have played a leading role in implementing many of the R2R project activities.
- Lastly, the availability of funding support and the lifespan of allocated funding limits WWF-SI ability to reach long and short term targets. With the opportunity to increase the duration of funding, to over the traditional 1 year funding term, WWF SI will be better equipt to carry out target objective within a longer timeframe.

#### **UNEXPECTED POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE IMPACTS**

As this phase of the project was focused on raising awareness amongst stakeholders and building partner capacity for implementing a Ridge to Reef planning approach within Western Province, no unexpected negative impacts were observed. During capacity building workshops, discussions between stakeholders did, however, often raise topics or issues that were not anticipated to be part of the workshop dialogue. An unexpected positive impact of these workshops was the identification of gaps in current Solomon Island policies, legislations and government involvement and what steps can be taken to help bridge such gaps. One example is the Protected Areas Advisory Committee, under the Ministry of Environment. As Protected Areas are anticipated to play an integral role in the Ridges to Reef approach, building the capacity of the advisory committee may lead to a more efficient process for achieving 'protected area' designations.

## **PROJECT COMPONENTS**

### **COMPONENT 1 PLANNED (as stated in the approved proposal):**

#### Awareness Raising; Advocacy, Building Support And Stakeholder Engagement:

This first awareness program focused on engaging government staff, NGO staff and local associations (mainly KIBCA and GELCA). As the majority of participants were located in the town of Gizo, this awareness session was hosted in Gizo. TNC staffs were asked to facilitate, as they have experience in the R2R process and are partnering with WWF to expand R2R work within Solomon Islands. Awareness was built by illustrating how terrestrial and marine conservation can be linked, through the Ridges to Reef approach, to better assist communities in conserving biodiversity, securing livelihoods and ecosystem services, and building resiliency against impacts of climate and other environmental changes. Increased knowledge regarding the R2R process was identified as another key outcome.

The second phase of the awareness program entailed community consultations on both Kolombangara and Ghizo Islands to communicate the proposed R2R project and to determine community support/leadership. It was determined that central communities, two from Ghizo Island and three from Kolombangara Island and surrounding villages were targeted for attending the R2R awareness.

Local radio was utilized to inform communities of these initial R2R consultations and to encourage both genders to participate. KIBCA and GELCA assisted in coordinating the consultations, and TNC was suggested to help facilitate.

During the final stage of the awareness program, engagement with Kolombangara communities; utilizing the approach KIBCA, WWF, TNC and Ecological Solutions decided on the most applicable and successful on Kolombangara Island. Ghizo Island communities were targeted for engagement in the awareness program through coordination's with GELCA. The aim of this awareness program was to increase community awareness of the R2R process and generate support for anticipated future R2R work.



Radio announcements and various materials were aimed to be developed, such as pamphlets, posters, fact sheets etc., to assist with the awareness activities carried out under this component of the project.

Awareness materials objectives aimed to be available to communities through KIBCA and GELCA to assist in implementing an effective awareness program. Articles were targeted to be published in various in-country newspapers to inform a wider audience of R2R efforts made to date in Western Province and of proposed next steps.

#### Activities/Products

**1.1** Awareness program with implementing partners: Provincial Government staff, National Government staff, local NGO staff, local association staff, and other relevant stakeholders (minimum of 15 participants required)

**1.2** Awareness program with communities: Minimum total of 60 Kolombangara and Ghizo Island community member participants, with a minimum to of 8 communities engaged (dependent on produced awareness materials)

**1.3** Awareness and outreach materials: Development and printing of R2R awareness materials in preparation for awareness workshop activities; material to include poster, pamphlets and article on WWF website

**1.4** Project staff to provide training and awareness on CEPF safeguards policy

**1.5** Free, prior and informed consultation with communities to be undertaken for the Ridges to Reef planning exercise

#### **COMPONENT 1 ACTUAL AT COMPLETION:**

##### Awareness Raising; Advocacy, Building Support And Stakeholder Engagement:

Although the initial awareness activities were postponed on account of poor and unsafe weather conditions, printing delays, national election commitments, and availability of stakeholders and communities groups, all activities and the deliverables were achieved within this initial phase of the Ridges to Reef project.

##### Outcomes/Achievements/Deliverables

###### **1.1. Awareness program with implementing partners and stakeholders:**

In September 2014 the initial R2R workshop was conducted, and included: WWF staff, local NGOs (NRDF and KIBCA), local associations (GELCA), community reps and provincial government representatives. This R2R workshop was facilitated by Mr. David Boseto, from Ecological Solutions in Gizo. David previously engaged communities in Choiseul in R2R projects. The aim of the workshop was to present R2R planning as a conservation tool and discuss with stakeholders how it might be a useful method for conserving the natural environments of Kolombangara and Ghizo Islands. This was also an opportunity for WWF staff to better understand what a R2R awareness program might entail. All stakeholders were informed of the proposed community awareness program and advice was sought on how to generate community support.

- 20 participants attended the workshop and signed off on their support for WWF R2R strategy
- Summary report with quotes from participants submitted to CEPF

###### **1.2. Awareness program with communities:**

Community awareness for R2R was completed for Kolombangara and Ghizo Island communities. Although not all anticipated communities were engaged in R2R awareness, as initially planned, the total number of targeted participants (60 members) was reached within the communities that were engaged. The R2R community awareness program focused on providing communities and stakeholders of Ghizo and Kolombangara Islands with a greater understanding of what the R2R planning process entails and in generating community support for the development of a R2R plan (to be conducted in phase 2 of the project if continued support from CEPF). It also provided community members with an opportunity to bring forward any questions, concerns, comments, suggestions regarding proposed next steps.

- 6 out of the 8 (planned for) communities were engaged in R2R awareness
- Delivery of awareness materials and R2R presentations conducted by Ecological Solutions, and assisted by WWF SI staff

### **1.3. Awareness and outreach materials:**

R2R awareness materials and media articles were developed and printed by the WWFSI communications officer in Fiji. This person was engaged to support WWF SI team in developing R2R awareness and media materials, as in-country limitations make doing so a very challenging task. The Nature Conservancy assisted WWF SI in sourcing information and materials used to support the design and development of posters and factsheets that were later distributed to communities and stakeholders during awareness activities (1.1 and 1.2).

- R2R Factsheet
- R2R Poster
- Awareness presentation for communities (prepared and conducted by Ecological Solutions)
- Article about Ridges to Reef conservation planning for Western Province on WWF website
- Article in the *Island Sun* Solomon Island Newspaper

### **1.4. CEPF safeguards policy**

- WWF staff trained and signed off on safeguard policies
- Mid-term review of safeguard strategies

### **1.5. Free, prior and informed consultation with communities**

- 35 participants
- 4 R2R support letter from stakeholders and community groups; (Western Province, GELCA, KIBCA and Gizo West Coast Management Committee)

## **COMPONENT 2 PLANNED (AS STATED IN THE APPROVED PROPOSAL):**

### Capacity Building

This component was aimed at the partners who may be involved in assisting communities in future R2R work (government staff, NGO staff, local associations, community leaders).

Within the Capacity Building component, there are 2 proposed activities:

#### *1. Look and Learn*

This activity entailed the participation of key partners (community leaders, NGO, local associations, Government staff) in a demonstration site visit where R2R has been successfully developed and implemented. During this 'Look and Learn' experience, relevant Western Province stakeholders engaged people who were involved in the R2R work in Choiseul to hear: their experiences with the R2R process, challenges, and lessons learnt. At the time during this project planning stage it was not known what community leaders were to be invited to participate. KIBCA and GELCA were identified as to be consulted on the matter, and it was decided prior to the Choiseul trip. As transportation was to be by boat, space was unfortunately limited. A minimum of 2 community leaders (one from both Kolombangara and Ghizo Islands) were encouraged to join.

#### *2. Capacity building workshops*

These workshops (maximum of 2) were to be hosted in Gizo. As with the awareness program, local TNC staff was engaged in facilitating the first workshop (the second one was not carried out, see result section below). Capacity building was to be focused on generating knowledge on what type of information will be required for future R2R work and on how that information can be obtained. The goal of the capacity building workshop(s) was to increase capacity within Western Province (government, civil society, community based organization, private sector) for using a Ridge to Reef conservation approach in the future.

## Component 2 Activities/Products

### **2.1.**

Look and Learn field trip experience to Choiseul Province, hosted by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for key stakeholders from Kolombangara and Ghizo Islands, to learn from the R2R activities developed and implemented in Choiseul, the location of TNC's R2R project site.

### **2.2.**

Capacity building workshop for implementing partners (Government staff provincial and national, NGOs, local associations, and key community reps), on the R2R planning process for involvement in anticipated second phase of this grant.

### **COMPONENT 2 ACTUAL AT COMPLETION:**

Due to challenges and issues concerning boat safety, weather and availability of stakeholders, the timing of the component 2 activities were not in accordance with the project's initial work plan timeframe. The Look and Learn trip was postponed on account of boat safety training and weather. As a result of availability of stakeholder and key partners, one capacity building workshop was conducted. The one day workshop was determined sufficient for meeting the outcomes and objectives associated with this activity under component 2.

## Outcomes/Achievements/Deliverables

### **2.1. Look and Learn:**

The Look and Learn trip took place from November 5-8. This activity provided key implementing partners and stakeholders the opportunity to visit communities in Choiseul Province (TNC project site) which were previously engaged by TNC in the R2R conservation planning process. Gizo/Kolombangara stakeholders learnt from these communities as they shared their experiences and lessons learnt.

### Achievements/Deliverables

- 35 participants attended the exploratory field trip to Choiseul Province
- Summary report on the results of the field trip with participants quotes, submitted to CEPF

### **2.2. Capacity Building Workshop:**

The final capacity building/outreach workshop was carried out on June 18 where 20+ participants attended. The workshop consisted of partners in Ghizo, such as local NGOs, community leaders and Western Provincial representatives. The aim of the workshop was to provide awareness of the R2R concept to high level stakeholders and decision makers. The rational was to ensure that these stakeholders and decision makers fully understand what R2R is and how this process can be beneficial to planning. The workshop was also conducted to gauge interest and support in conducting R2R planning development as WWFSI looks to apply for the 2nd phase of CEPF funding. The outcome of the workshop was successful, with all stakeholders understanding the R2R process and also support in developing R2R plan for Ghizo and Kolombangara island if WWFSI successful with obtaining CEPF 2nd Phase funding.

### Achievements/Deliverables

- 23 attendants for the capacity building workshop; facilitated by TNC
- A database (excel table) showing types of data sets required for future R2R work
- A newspaper article informing the public of R2R conservation efforts in the Western Province
- A summary report on the results achieved during capacity building workshop

### **COMPONENT 3 PLANNED (AS STATED IN THE APPROVED PROPOSAL):**

Not applicable

### **COMPONENT 3 ACTUAL AT COMPLETION:**

Not applicable

## **DESCRIBE ANY UNREALIZED COMPONENTS (IF APPLICABLE)**

Although some project components were not carried out in line with the proposed time frame, all activities within the project were accomplished. There are no unrealized components.

## **PRODUCTS, TOOLS AND METHODOLOGY GENERATED DURING PROJECT**

For specific Component activity products, refer to the Achievements/Deliverables section under the Project Component section (above).

In addition, the R2R Conservation presentation conducted by The Nature Conservancy was recognized as an excellent tool to use to generate high-level stakeholder R2R awareness and support. This presentation is available upon request from TNC.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

### **PROJECT DESIGN PROCESS: (ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT DESIGN THAT CONTRIBUTED TO ITS SUCCESS/SHORTCOMINGS)**

#### Success

The project Log Framework and online reporting enabled project staff to more effectively track progress of activities and deliverables. Several WWF SI staffing changes occurred throughout the project period which subsequently meant that different/new staffs were required to update the online reporting system. Having a clear outline of the reporting requirements allowed for an efficient method for WWF to meet its reporting requirements.

#### Shortcomings

- The two reporting requirements; the online format and the external Component (1 and 2) related summary reports, created unnecessary and unrealistic undertakings on top of project activities. Online reporting should be conducted efficiently and capture all relevant information required to satisfy donor expectations and to eliminate the need for redundant reporting and duplicated efforts. It might be beneficial to limit the reporting of project deliverables to include the online section and critical deliverables only.

### **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION: (ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT EXECUTION THAT CONTRIBUTED TO ITS SUCCESS/SHORTCOMINGS)**

#### Successes

For implementing activities under Component 1 of the project, WWFSI engaged local NGO partner KIBCA, who actively engages Kolombangara Island communities in various conservation efforts. The rationale was that by increasing KIBCA staff understanding of and capacity for Ridges to Reef conservation planning, KIBCA could more effectively assist the communities of Kolombangara to achieve their conservation and resource management goals. Additionally, as Kolombangara Island is a fairly new and unfamiliar project site, engaging KIBCA proved to be a good strategy in ensuring the successful implementation of community-based project activities. Building off of relationships between KIBCA and the communities, WWF staff members were able to initiate partnerships with the new communities. When beginning projects in new areas, WWF staff should learn from this experience and adopt the same process, which is to work closely with other NGOs or groups already active in the area.

Additionally, the decision to engage The Nature Conservancy and Ecological Solutions in implementing the project activities proved to be invaluable. Much support was received from both groups and much knowledge shared, based on lessons learned from previous R2R activities carried out in Choiseul and Isabel Province. Key stakeholders in Western Province were able to see first-hand how the R2R process was currently being used in Solomon Islands and they were able to learn directly from communities involved. Such opportunities, particularly the Look and Learn experience, were very influential as exposure to other successful, ongoing R2R efforts left lasting impressions on stakeholders and implementing partners from Western Province.

The overall support for a R2R conservation strategy has been quite overwhelming. As a result of WWF SI's strong partnerships within Western Province, all potential stakeholders were included in project activities. The development of a comprehensive R2R management strategy for the whole of the Western Province is a realistic goal. Focusing first on Kolombangara Island and Ghizo Island will enable stakeholders to become more familiar with the R2R process.

TNC staff presented a very informative presentation to partners and stakeholders during the final capacity building workshop. It summarized Solomon Island's various obligations to conservation and discussed the importance of Government support and endorsement of efforts made/proposed by implementing partners. This presentation should be made again, in the next phase, just to higher-level government staff. It was also recognized that the R2R concept could be useful in the strengthening/continuation of Solomon Island's Protected Areas Act legislation, as briefly mentioned before. Conversations with partners highlighted that the application process for Protected Areas in Solomon Islands should be a priority area of focus for all involved in R2R work in SI.

The overwhelming support for a R2R conservation strategy has been a very positive. With WWF SI strong partnership support there is great promise for a comprehensive R2R management strategy for the whole of the Western Province.

#### Shortcomings

WWF SI staffs were entirely dependent on other partners (TNC/Ecological Solutions) for conducting the R2R community awareness. This made the completion of the awareness activities in accordance with our project timeframe/work plan quite difficult. In addition to the usual scheduling challenges encountered when working with the communities, we then had scheduling conflicts associated with engaging our partners. Although there have been staff changes since the commencement of this R2R project, resources and capacity gained by WWF SI staff should limit their dependency on partners in the future and enable them to more efficiently coordinate and implement coinciding project activities.

The capacities of WWF staff to complete reports and awareness materials, and availability to commit to the R2R project do to other WWF project commitments, created shortcoming when meeting project deliverables. Coinciding WWF SI project deadlines meant that some of the R2R project deliverables were not achieved on time and to an efficient standard. If there was more detail provide in the online reporting sections, it would enable any of the WWF staff to complete Final Reporting requirement. In anticipation of a R2R phase 2, more work should be put into the online reporting.

Furthermore, in country limitations made the development of awareness materials by WWF staff in SI impossible. A communications person was secured in Fiji to assist with the R2R awareness/media needs. Taking this action to involve WWF Fiji alleviated much stress and frustration WWF SI and meant that awareness materials could reliably be developed and made available for in-country use.

Lastly, engaging the Provincial Government continues to be a challenge. The final 'capacity building' workshop participants did include representatives from both Provincial and National government departments, but the National government was better represented.

## OTHER LESSONS LEARNED RELEVANT TO CONSERVATION COMMUNITY:

There were several additional lessons learnt during the first phase of this R2R project.

One of the major obstacles of working with communities in a setting such as the Solomon Islands was reinforced many times throughout this initial phase; interruptions and delays to project timelines are inevitable and beyond anyone's control. When scheduling project activities and developing a project timeline, all possible factors that may influence the timing in which activities are implemented should be considered. Grace periods should also be included to account for unforeseen delays.

Adaptive management and staff flexibility is crucial in ensuring that, despite the above obstacle, project activities are conducted and deliverables achieved in accordance with the overall project timeframe. Communities appear to be very receptive to the idea of R2R, but it is likely that they still don't really understand what it means for resource management/conservation. In the early stages of the next phase, before deciding what communities are involved in the project, another awareness program should be conducted with a slightly different focus: the utility of R2R conservation planning and what it means for community livelihoods and food security. We should also think about doing some awareness with the logging company (KFPL) on Kolombangara Island as they are a main stakeholder on the island. The actual 'on-the-ground' implementation of R2R work will be quite complicated on both Ghizo and Kolombangara Islands, due to the complex land tenure systems and resource ownership tensions. Future awareness efforts should aim to include as many of the stakeholders as possible.

As a result of many discussions had with partners in Western Province, it is overwhelmingly evident that NGOs and other groups are working in isolation of each other more often than not. Despite aiming to achieve similar goals and results, the amount of cooperation between implementing partners is much lower than one might expect. As R2R is a highly integrated approach to managing resources and conserving biodiversity, it may provide a long overdue opportunity for different NGOs and partners to work together more effectively.

## ADDITIONAL FUNDING SUPPORT

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
WWF Australia	B	6,000.00	In -kind science specialist's time from WWF Aust
CTI	B	6,000.00	In -kind services of deputy leader of Coral Triangle Program's time
WWF SPPO	B	3,000.00	R2R advisory capacity from WWF
WWF International	B	3,000.00	Network consultation services
AUSAID	B	6,600.00	Awareness materials/trainings/meetings
WWF US	B	3,200	Awareness materials/trainings/meetings

## SUSTAINABILITY/REPLICABILITY

### **ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY: SUCCESS AND CHALLENGES**

The duration (1 year) of the R2R Phase 1 was short, and therefore achieving sustainability of the R2R conservation for Ghizo and Kolombangara Island were limited. The main objective of R2R Phase 1 was to raise awareness on the Ridges to Reef conservation approach, and to build the capacity of national and provincial stakeholders and partners, and communities and civil groups.

As this R2R participatory approach and methodology is based on the model developed by the Nature Conservancy (TNC) for the Choiseul and Isabel Provinces, WWF SI staff members have worked closely in consultation with TNC during this project phase to create the foundation for sustainability/replicability. WWF staff and partners (KIBCA, GELCA, and Ghizo Island community groups) have increased their understanding of R2R approach and during a similar pilot approached used for Ghizo Island. Having recently completing the pilot *Conservation Blueprint Mapping* project for Ghizo Island, WWF staff and its partners were able to build on their knowledge and awareness of the TNC R2R methodology during this phase. They now have the capacity to implement the TNC methodology and its sustainability actions in the event of a future R2R Phase.

Although Phase 1 of this R2R project was successful in laying the groundwork on sustainability and its replicability through the awareness and capacity building components activities; building on partners and local community's capacity in conservation and resource management will be required in order to achieve sustainability of the marine and terrestrial conservation/resource management objectives for Ghizo and Kolombangara Islands.

In addition, it should be noted that only half of the project has been completed in this Phase 1 and with the opportunity for further R2R work (e.g. a Phase 2), the sustainability/replicability of the R2R conservation approach will have the promise of achievability.

### Success

WWF-SI has been working with Western Province communities for over ten years, and has established lasting and trusting relationships with the civil community members and the provincial government. Because of these relationships, WWF has been able to successfully address some of the Phase 1 sustainability initiatives by supporting each other where possible and ensuring that the project activities and donor requirements are met.

As the idea of this phase was to build the knowledge and capacity of partners and local community to carry out future R2R conservation, they were encouraged to be a part of all phase 1 components. During this project phase, measures taken towards achieving short and long term sustainability were incorporated within awareness and capacity building activities. Stakeholders, partners and WWF SI staff now understand and have the capacity to move forward to an implementation stage of this R2R project.

Specifically, WWF SI has worked and engaged local communities groups, KIBCA and GELCA throughout phase 1, and they now have the knowledge to take lead in some aspect of future R2R work. It is anticipated that they will be lead in the participatory mapping in the event of Phase 2 R2R.

With continued engagements with KIBC and GELCA on the R2R methodology, in future R2R work, there is potential for these groups replicate R2R conservation strategy in other areas of the Western Province. Additionally, with the opportunity to continue to the next R2R implementation phase, there is great promise for this approach to be replicated in other parts of the Western Province and to achieve its project and conservation sustainability objectives.

### Challenges

There are always external assumptions or risks that impact project sustainability when implementing various projects, especially in the Pacific Melanesian regions, and while working with communities and governments. This R2R project is heavily linked to community participation and involvement which intern generate challenges that influence planned activities and the success of achieving sustainability goals. For example, some frequent challenges and risk WWF SI staff experience while working with communities in the Solomon Islands include, internal community and religious disputes, death in a community which means time is set aside for mourning, and unfavorable weather and sea conditions. Fortunately WWF SI staffs are highly skilled at applying adaptive management, identifying other possible approaches which ensure the continuations of activities are successfully managed.

Achieving project sustainability and replication of project results, after completion of projects, is recognized as a major challenge throughout the Melanesian region. However, achieving long-term sustainability of an integrated R2R conservation plan has yet to be actualized and determine. With future opportunity to carry out R2R conservation plans within the Solomon Western Province, the sustainability indicators will start to be realized and measurable.

Furthermore, achieving long-term sustainable impacts will require federal and provincial support (legislative and financial) after the completion of a R2R conservation strategy for the Kolombangara and Ghizo Island. To achieve CEPFs long-term sustainability goals, Solomon Island government will need to continue to support and build capacity of community and partner groups (KIBCA, GELCA) so that they are more equipped to carry out the R2R efforts, to achieve sustainable terrestrial and marine resource management practices for the Western Province.

## **SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENT**

### **SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SAFEGUARD POLICY ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED**

As this R2R project was conducted in area of Indigenous Peoples to the Solomon Islands, Social Assessments and Safeguard procedures were carried out prior to any component activities implemented.

WWF SI is well versed in working with Indigenous Peoples of the Solomon Islands, and has the knowledge and is familiar with Safeguard Policies procedures from previous projects conducted throughout the Solomon Island over the past ten years. The WWF SI staff members were able to apply this knowledge to this R2R project, and successfully carried out the required CEPF social and environmental safeguard policies.

All awareness raising and participatory capacity building activities involved Indigenous Peoples consultation, including communities and customary owners, to develop planning tools to support informed decision making about the sustainable use and management of natural resources and to carry out awareness raising activities. WWF staff consulted extensively with all affected Ghizo and Kolombangara Island communities during the planning phase, and conducting awareness and capacity building activities to communities of Ghizo and Kolombangara Islands.

There were no adverse impacts to the environmental or communities with the activity conducted in this R2R phase. The majority of activities required community consultation, and approval from partners and community leaders was conducted prior visits, and for all awareness activities. Letters requesting permission to conduct awareness and capacity building activities were sent to community leaders prior to WWF visits.



The CEPF Safeguard policies for WWFSI staff and key partner training were carried out and signed off by WWF staff. The schedule timeline for implementing social safeguard policies was changed, and training was carried out to coincide with the WWF and partners training activity. The rationale in this decision was that all of the partners involved were attending R2R training and it made sense to combine the CEPF safeguard policy training and obtain all partner/participants signatures at this time.

Similarly, the *Free Prior Informed Consent* activity was implemented to coincide with the awareness activities for KIBCA, GELCA and the provincial government representatives. The reason to combine the partner/stakeholder awareness and FPRIOR consent policy training was that all partners involved in the project would be in attendance and WWF was able to obtain the R2R letter of support from each stakeholder at the time of this activity.

Lastly, due to a boating incident along the travel route to the *Look and Learn* activity in Choiseul, additional boat safety training for staff and improvements to the safety of the boats was conducted, prior to the implementation of the capacity building component activities. The rationale to postpone the scheduled activity was to ensure the safety of all WWF staff and partners travelling to area schedule for the R2R activities.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

As stakeholders gained more knowledge regarding the R2R process and approach, understanding of what the next phase of the R2R project will entail also increased. Along with this came a certain amount of clarity pertaining to the transition from one project phase to the next. Key recommendations for moving forward to the next phase are captured below:

- Maintain momentum between project phases. Continue to generate support and raise awareness for R2R work amongst important stakeholders in Western Province to ensure that the value of R2R conservation planning is understood. Priority focus for the initial R2R plan should include increasing the federal and provincial high-level support through further opportunities of engagement.
  - The R2R conservation awareness presentation conducted by TNC during the Capacity Building workshop in June, 2015, generated positive discussion regarding how to increase support and involvement of high-level government officials. There was agreement that the TNC presentation should be presented to high-level government official and resource companies. This should be scheduled in as an activity carried out if there is a Phase 2 R2R project.
- Continue the collection and collation of data required to develop the maps that will be used during the participatory mapping workshops. To capture all relevant threats, values, and opportunities key stakeholders and experts will be required to assist with the data collection. Identifying stakeholders to engage in this aspect of the project is something that should be ongoing.
- The next phase should strive to develop and launch the Ghizo/Kolombangara Island R2R Conservation Plans with the aim of implementing them soon thereafter. Key stakeholders and partners should begin discussions on how the R2R Plans can be implemented and governed to ensure longevity and achievement of sustainability goals.
- In the early stages of the next phase of the project, WWF staff, supported by TNC and/or Ecological Solutions staff, should plan an awareness program for: KFPL (logging company on Kolombangara) and relevant government departments, including the Solomon Island's Protected Areas Advisory Committee within the Ministry of Environment.

## INFORMATION SHARING AND CEPF POLICY

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\*\*\*If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages\*\*\*

## PERFORMANCE TRACKING REPORT ADDENDUM

### CEPF Global Targets (not applicable)

### (Enter Grant Term)

**Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.  
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.**

<b>Project Results</b>	<b>Is this question relevant?</b>	<b>If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.</b>	<b>Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.</b>	<b>Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2013 to May 30, 2014. (Attach annexes if necessary)</b>
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.				Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?				Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.				
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.				
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.				

**If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table**

